

# NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS  
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***For Immediate Release***

March 29, 2005

## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF**

**Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois  
Glenn N. Anderson, Assistant Special Agent In Charge, ATF, Chicago  
Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Springfield Division  
Charles Brueggemann, Colonel, Illinois State Police  
Brad Demuzio, Director, Illinois Secretary of State Police  
Chris Sullivan, Chief, Alton Police Department  
Robert Hertz, Madison County Sheriff**

Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today the unsealing of ten indictments (charging eleven individuals) recently returned by the federal grand jury sitting in East St. Louis.

**RANDAL L. BROWN**, age 53, of Godfrey, was charged with one count of Engaging in a Business as a Manufacturer of Firearms; twenty counts of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm; nineteen counts of Possession of a Machinegun; one count of Possession of a Machinegun Receiver; six counts of Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device; one count of Possession of an Unregistered Silencer; and one count of Possession of a Silencer without a Serial Number.

**LAURA BROWN**, age 25, of Godfrey, was charged with one count of Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of Personal Property by Explosion; one count of Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of a Mailbox; and one count of Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device; and one count of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm.

**MARK CHAPPEL**, age 22, of Alton, was charged with one count of Possession of a Machinegun and one count of Possession of Ammunition by an Unlawful User of a Controlled Substance.

**CHRISTOPHER HALL**, age 23, of Godfrey, was charged with one count of Possession of a Machinegun.

**CHARLES HEMPHILL III**, age 43 of Alton, was charged with thirteen counts of Possession of a Machinegun; one count of Possession of a Silencer without a Serial Number; one count of Possession of an Unregistered Silencer, and six counts of Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device.

**CHRISTOPHER HOWARD**, age 40, of Godfrey, was charged with two counts of Possession of an Unregistered Machinegun.

**MARK HOWARD**, age 48, of Godfrey, was charged with one count of Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of Personal Property by Explosion; one count of Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of a Mailbox; four counts of Possession of an Unregistered Firearm; four counts of Possession of a Machinegun; seven counts of Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device; one count of Possession of an Unregistered Silencer; and one count of Possession of a Silencer without a Serial Number.

**MICHAEL OWENS**, age 56, of Maryville, was charged with Possession of an Unregistered Firearm, Possession of a Machinegun, Possession of a Silencer without a Serial Number, and Possession of an Unregistered Silencer.

**ERIC TERRY**, age 38, of Alton, was charged with four counts of Possession of a Machinegun.

**WILLIAM VOGT**, age 23, of Alton, was charged with one count of Possession of a Machinegun.

**JAMES DEAN WEHRLE**, age 41, of St. Charles, Missouri, was charged with one count of Possession of a Machinegun.

Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of Personal Property by Explosion carries a minimum term of five years imprisonment and a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. Aiding and Abetting the Destruction of a Mailbox carries a maximum sentence of not more than three years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. All other charged offenses carry a penalty of not more than ten years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000.

In addition, forfeiture counts have been alleged against **RANDAL BROWN**, seeking forfeiture of real estate; **MARK HOWARD**, seeking forfeiture of real estate and a vehicle; and **MICHAEL OWENS**, seeking forfeiture of a vehicle.

*An indictment contains charges filed against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of all charges until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.*

“Our office is committed to enforcing the nation’s gun laws as an essential step in promoting the safety of our communities,” said Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney. “Weapons such as those involved in today’s indictments pose an especially high risk to the public. Thus, their illegal manufacture and possession demands the vigorous prosecution we are now pursuing.”

According to Andrew L. Traver, ATF Special Agent in Charge, “ATF remains committed to stemming the flow of illegal weapons and explosives into our communities. ATF’s mission is to protect the public. We will continue to aggressively carry out that mission by

working on a daily basis with our law enforcement partners. The illegal firearms and explosive devices that have been recovered during the course of this investigation are extremely dangerous while in the possession of individuals who disobey the federal firearms and explosive laws. This investigation should serve as a warning to the criminal element in our country. Illegal weapons and explosives, and crimes committed with them, will never be tolerated in our efforts to safeguard the citizens of the United States.”

Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI, stated, “The Springfield Division of the FBI commends the ATF and other State and local law enforcement agencies for their efforts to jointly combat criminal matters of mutual interest and the FBI is proud to be a part of such interagency cooperation.

Brad Demuzio of the Illinois Secretary of State Police, stated, “The Illinois Secretary of State Police, with its Bomb Squad, is committed to its partnership with Federal, State, and Local law enforcement in ridding the streets of illegal Improvised Explosive Devices (IED’s). The squad’s willingness, expertise, and its highly specialized equipment greatly reduces the potential risk of death and injury to both law enforcement and the citizens of the State of Illinois when explosive threats are found and subsequently neutralized.”

These prosecutions are being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Stephen Clark and Andrew Simonson.